

Free essay on the effects of online courses on education

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



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Introduction

The education sector has had major changes and improvements over the years. These changes have impacted differently on the education process especially in higher education. Online learning is the latest trend in higher education. Online learning has come with many advantages and challenges to the students and teachers involved in this method of education. Research and analysis focusing on online education have shown the role that online courses have had on learners . The paper will examine why students are more inclined to choose online courses, the impacts of online education and learning on higher learning, the challenges that come about online education and the possible resolutions to these problems.

Online Learning

Online learning involves the incorporation of technology into the teaching and learning process. In online education, the student and the teachers are never in physical contact. Exchange of educational materials occurs through the internet and different media such as videos, audio files, images, documents, spreadsheets and slides. The learner can study from anywhere, and at whatever time they desire, but within a definite period . The learner also gets assessed and examined online. The teacher has the task of providing relevant information and resource materials regarding the scope of the course.

Online discussions with classmates and one-on-one communication with tutors occur online via chat rooms, teleconferences and e-mail. Technology has become the most crucial aspect in all stages of human living and interaction and, therefore, sooner than later different aspects of technology were absorbed by the education sector. Various higher learning institutions have successfully integrated online learning to their systems. Students have particularly been appealed by this form of learning and have enrolled for online courses in large numbers .

Reasons for Student Preference for Online Learning

The main reason students prefer online learning is the convenience with which they can to study. The lecture room is anywhere the student wants it to be as long as they have internet connectivity or the relevant learning resources. Students are capable of studying at their places of residence, when relaxing at the beach or even when taking a train or bus. In online

learning, the student can tailor their learning program to fit seamlessly into their requirements and schedule unlike in traditional learning where their physical presence in class was necessary.

In online learning, the learner can study when they feel they are most productive. Some students prefer to study in the morning, others during the day and some at night. Thanks to online learning the student can study during the periods when they feel they will get more out of their learning. With online learning, the student can control the tempo of the learning process. The student can study the information provided at their speed, therefore, improve their understanding.

The availability of interactive technology is also desirable to students. Online threaded discussions and chatting tend to boost the learning process.

Positive Impact of Online Learning

Since the introduction of online learning, there have been many advantages obtained from online learning. The most prominent benefit has been the convenience with which students can undertake their courses. The student can learn while at any part of the world if he or she has access to the relevant learning materials or internet. Students can study using their smart phones, tablets or laptops wherever they are at any time. The student can access all the learning resources during times when they feel their ability to learn and absorb information is highest. The students also dictate the pace of the learning process to suit their mental ability. Online learning has instilled equality into the learning process . Students with different abilities, disposition and personalities have a level learning field. Students who have

difficulties with physical interaction can productively interact with fellow students and teachers over the internet, therefore, enhancing their input from the learning practice.

Online discussions have also proved to be more productive than face to face group discussions. There is reduced cost of learning because the student does not regularly commute to school or take accommodation near the institution. Due to the close interaction between the lecturers and students, the lecturer can know more about the student and their abilities than when teaching a class of many students . Learning materials available can satisfy the different styles of learning for the student. Visual learners are provided with images, video clips, slides and graphs while auditory learners get audio files for their study. It improves the learning experience for learners with assorted cognitive abilities.

Online learning has dissolved the geographical impediments that came with old learning methods. A student in China can undertake online courses offered in American universities and vice-versa. It enables intellectual exchanges between students and teachers in different locations. With appropriate time management, students can easily arrange their online learning sessions to fit their busy schedule and follow their pace of study to complete the degree program . The use of different technologies to learn also improves the students understanding of technology and its working which further aids the learning process. Through online education, students with disabilities are also seamlessly incorporated into the learning process. The online course materials are personalized to meet the needs of students

with visual impairment, hearing difficulties, speaking difficulties or physical incapacitation .

Negative Impact of Online Education

Despite its many advantages, online education has come with a number of problems. Different learners have different capabilities with technology. The fundamental for online learning is technology, and this could pose many challenges to users with low understanding of technology. Such users may not get more out of the learning process than their techno savvy counterparts, and this will slow down their learning . Students with devices that are incompatible with the multimedia resources provided are also at a disadvantage. Students with poor time management skills are also hindered by online learning. Such students may not cope with this learning process and will ultimately lag behind.

Another challenge is that some learning resources for the course may not be available electronically. Some books with valuable information may not be in e-book text format, or some information could not be available in video or audio format. The online interaction among students and with their teachers reduces interaction to a minimum and thus obstructs the learners from developing social skills that are very crucial to human development. The lack of regular supervision by teachers could lead some less focused students to lose interest in the learning process. There is a deduction that course completion levels for courses offered using traditional modes is higher than with courses offered online, which reflects the decreased level of students' devotion to online learning. Online learning also puts students who do not

possess the necessary devices or do not have access to the internet at a disadvantage .

Solutions to Challenges Facing Online Education

The various problems encountered in learning need innovative and immediate solutions to develop an online learning experience. First, teachers and students should undergo intense training on the use of technology in order to get optimum results from the online learning process . Students with low levels of technological literacy be guided or have programs that fit their level of knowledge. For increased social interaction, the lecturers should schedule video conferences so that students can interact with one another and the teacher. It will improve student-student relations and also student-tutor interaction. In online learning, students may have the feeling that they are not developing emotionally . Lecturers can tackle this issue by offering significant feedback when students make mistakes and by offering personalized attention to each student.

About the problem of learners who lose interest in online learning, the teachers should schedule regular assessments so that such students are compelled to concentrate on their studying. Teachers can tackle the problem of unavailability of some learning resources by providing other viable alternatives to the targeted resource. Students lacking the necessary technology could solve this by buying used computers, laptops or tablets that come at subsidized prices. For students to obtain optimum benefit from the online learning process, they must regularly communicate with their teacher.

They should also ask for guidance and ask questions regarding areas of the course that they do not understand adequately .

Conclusion

Online education significantly relies on technology to provide learning. Learning resources are transmitted through different media to the student. Online learning is popular among students because it offers convenience, flexibility, fits each student's learning style and also enhanced exchange of information. Online learning has globalized education, brought equality to the learning process for students, reduced the cost of education and enabled students with disabilities to learn with ease. However, online education has come with ills such as lack of social growth among students, technological divisions, lack of interest in learning and little interaction. To improve the online learning, the technological divide requires narrowing by appropriate training and social growth can be achieved by regular video conferences. Online learning is an efficient method of learning and the various challenges should be solved to improve learning and comprehension by students and also enhance knowledge transfer from teachers to students.

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